(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there has been step fall in export of tea during the last years: and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (d) Exports of India tea have shown a declining trend during the years 1992-93, 1993-94 and the current financial year. Reasons for lower quantum of exports are attributable to lower imports by Russia and other CIS countries on account of their internal economic problems: lower imports of tea by Iran, Egypt and Saudi Arabia and competition from other producing countries.

In order to step up exports of Indian tea to Russia, an agreement has been signed with Russian Government which inter-alia provides for import of tea under the debt repayment mechanism. A suitable module has been approved by the Government for promotional strategies to be undertaken in Russia and and other CIS countries by the Tea Board in consultation with the tea industry. Iranian authorities have also been requested to facilitate opening of LCs for exports of Indian tea in respect of contracts signed by Indian exporters with Iranian buying agency. Other steps taken to boost exports of tea include promotional campaigns through Tea Board's offices abroad. It consists of (i) participation in trade fairs/exhibitions; (ii) media campaign to increase consumer awareness towards various unique characteristics of Indian tea (iii) media campaign to popularise Indian tea through Tea Board Marketing symbol and (iv) support to various foreign brands containing Indian tea. A part of the expenditure incurred by importers for promotional campaigns is met from Tea Board Budget. Tea Board has also undertaken Darjeeling and Assam Logo campaign in UK and sponsored brand promotion schemes to popularise classic Indian teas.

Import of Plastic Garbage

881. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has been increasingly importing cheap and reprocessable plastic garbage,

(b) if so, what is the percentage rise in the imports of cheap and reprocessable plastic garbage during the last three years (year-wise);

(c) whether Government have made any study of the hazards associated with the recycling of plastic waste;

(d) if so, what are the details therof; and

(e) what is the comparative position in racyling of plastic waste in relation to the Western countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (e) Under the current Export and Import Policy, import of all types of plastic waste (except PET bottle waste) is restricted for import. This restriction has been imposed with effect from 31-3-1994 on account of factors including hazards associated with the recycling of plastic waste and after careful consideration of various issues invoved. Therefore, the possibility of increase in imports of plastic waste does not arise.

Export of granite

882. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total export of granite from India, during the years 1992-93, 1993-94 and 1994-95; and

(c) what is the break of the total export in terms of raw granite and polished granite?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) The break up of exports of granite are as given below: